

VZCZCXRO0830

OO RUEHAO RUEHCD RUEHGA RUEHGD RUEHHA RUEHHO RUEHMC RUEHMT RUEHNG
RUEHNL RUEHQU RUEHRD RUEHRG RUEHRS RUEHTM RUEHVC

DE RUEHTG #0568/01 1901356

ZNY CCCCC ZZH

O 091356Z JUL 09

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0080

INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/CDR USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL//CINC/POLAD// IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/CDRJTFB SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEAHND/COMJTF-B SOTO CANO HO IMMEDIATE

RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J5 MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE 1092

RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

RUMIAAA/USSOUTHCOM MIAMI FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000568

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/06/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: HONDURAN COUP: THE "WHITE TEAM"

REF: A. TEGUCIGALPA 527

[1](#)B. 08 TEGUCIGALPA 1136

TEGUCIGALP 00000568 001.2 OF 002

Classified By: Ambassador Hugo Llorens, reasons 1.4 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Those demonstrating in support of the June 28 coup, who have made the color white the symbol of their movement, share the sincere belief that Zelaya's removal from office was a patriotic act in defense of democratic principles and the constitutional order. The "White Team," which comprises the bulk of the Honduran political and economic establishment and probably the majority of the population, generally believe Zelaya was on the verge of establishing a leftist dictatorship. Although some whites privately concede that the coup might have been illegal, they are virulently opposed to bringing Zelaya back. Post will report on those aligned with Zelaya (the "Red Team") septel. End summary.

Who Are the White Team?

[1](#)2. (C) The broad coalition supporting the current de facto regime and opposing the return of President Zelaya to power have come to be known locally as the "whites," since they typically don white in their demonstrations as a symbol of peace. The official name of the coalition organizing the bulk of the demonstrations is the "Civic and Democratic Union." Participants are generally comprised of the better off and better educated segments of Honduran society. But many people of humble means are also strongly opposed to returning Zelaya to power.

[1](#)3. (C) Micheletti's cabinet draws from both of the leading political parties, the Liberals and the Nationals, as well as the small PINU and Christian Democrat parties, unified only in their opposition to President Zelaya, whom they generally believe was on the verge of dissolving Congress and calling for a constituent assembly after declaring victory in his planned June 28 opinion poll on holding a referendum to rewrite the constitution.

4 (C) In general, the news media are now strongly in support

of the whites, with some moderate and pro-Zelaya exceptions. Media magnates Jose Ferrari and Jorge Canahuati, long-time bitter critics of Zelaya, are eager mouthpieces for the whites. Thus, if one wants to know the position of the whites, one need only read or visit the website of Canahuati's "El Heraldo" or "La Prensa." Most whites are traditionally pro-U.S., although they feel betrayed by the U.S. opposition to the coup and support for Zelaya's reinstatement as President. They generally support a market economy and the rule of law, although they eagerly rationalize Zelaya's extralegal removal.

Attitudes of the Business Community

15. (C) Most of the major business associations came out quickly in support of the coup. The National Association of Industries (ANDI), formerly headed by the pro-Zelaya Adolfo "Fito" Facusse, has stated that what occurred was not a coup but rather the culmination of a legal process to remove Zelaya from office for committing illegal acts. Furthermore, taking Zelaya out of the country rather than placing him in a Honduran jail was best for the security of Hondurans and prevented Hugo Chavez from ruling Honduras by proxy. The Cortes Chamber of Commerce, the most important business chamber in the country, agrees that Hugo Chavez, not Zelaya, is the enemy and considers Chavez to be the one manipulating the situation and the international press. The Farmers and Ranchers Association (FENAGH) has stated that President Zelaya's actions were in violation of the law and therefore he needed to be removed. Representatives of many of these business groups are currently in Washington attempting to lobby Congress with their side of the story.

TEGUCIGALP 00000568 002.2 OF 002

How Many Whites Are There?

16. (C) The wealthy and middle classes, save for a small group of left-leaning thinkers and public employees, is almost universally in support of the coup. Many supported Zelaya at first, some even up to six months ago. But Zelaya's increasingly leftist rhetoric over the past two years, coupled with his moves to join the Venezuelan-led Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) and his mismanagement of public finances drove them progressively against him. Zelaya's drastic increase in the minimum wage in January alienated what was left of his business support, and his defiance of court orders to carry out his constitutional reform opinion poll left him essentially no remaining supporters among the traditional establishment. The rapidly growing evangelical community, and the traditionally powerful catholic church are also strongly opposed to Zelaya.

17. (C) However, the wealthy, the educated and the middle class represent a minority of Honduran society. Nearly 60 percent of Honduran households live in poverty, according to official surveys, and more than 35 percent are "extremely" poor -- unable to afford a basic nutritious diet. One might assume Zelaya's populist message engendered support among this majority of poor Hondurans. But Post's conversations with NGOs, religious figures and others who work with the poorest of Honduran society reveal that while there are groups and communities who do indeed support Zelaya and oppose the coup, the majority either support the coup or, most likely, are indifferent.

LLORENS